



Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas

NOTES AND ACTIONS Local Action Group Meeting

17.30 – Wednesday, 9th June 2010
Wark Town Hall, Wark

Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group (NULAG):

Roger Wilson
Alan Winlow
Anna Charlton
Anthony Murray
Ben Tansey
Elisabeth Rowark
Elizabeth Stewart
James Cookson
James Saunby
Jennifer Hewitson
Johnny Wilson
Michael Nixon
Pat Beaumont
Wendy Bond

Northumberland National Park Authority:

Local Action Group Co-ordinator
Local Action Group Administration Officer
Director of Policy and Resources
Director of Programs and Specials Services

Tom Burston
Sylvia Byerley
Stuart Evans
Robert Mayhew

Northumberland County Council:

Heater Smith
Carol Robinson

One NorthEast:

General Practise Surveyer

Michael Patterson

Anthony Ives

NULAG Apologies Received:

Anne Lowrie
Heather Hunter
Mark Mather
Mike Murray
Peter Murray
Stuart Moss
Vincent Milburn

1.0 Welcome from the Chair

The Chairman called the meeting to order and welcomed Carol Robinson of Northumberland County Council and Robert Mayhew, Director of Programs and Special Services for Northumberland National Park to the LAG Meeting..

2.0 Notes and Actions of the Previous Meeting

The Notes and Actions of the previous meeting held at the Lady Waterford Hall, Ford on the 8th April 2010 were declared a true and accurate record.

3.0 Financial Statment

LAG Co-ordinator, Tom Burston, distributed a one page report giving a breakdown of the current financial state fo the LAG. This report reviewed the current project allocations and running costs for the Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group. It gave futher details as to how approved project spend is profiled across the financial year and detailed the running costs budget.

4.0 Report on Visit to Swedith Rural Parliament – Elisabeth Rowark

LAG Member, Elisabeth Rowark reported back to the LAG on the trip taken by vice-chair, Heather Hunter, Mike Murray and herself to the opening of the Swedish Rural Parliament in Sunne. She thanked Mike Murray and Sylvia Byerley for their efforts in making the trip such a success.

She impressed how well organised the whole event was with almost a hundred international guests offering an excellent opportunity to network with other Leader groups across Europe. The programme was well thought out balancing the interests of both the Swedish parliament with that of the international guests.

It was suggest from the positive outcome of the trip to Sunne that there is scope for an English Rural Parliament and that the perhaps local action groups across England could act as facilitators of this network.

Members felt that rather than duplicating the work of community forums the LAG should help to link these various community bodies with the view towards establishing an English Rural Parliament. The possibility of using Leader to host the first event.

Members voted to investigate how Leader could facilitate this.

5.0 Gap Analysis, Annual Report and Work Plan

NU LAG Co-ordorinator, Tom Burston, presented to the LAG the initial propposition from the GAP analysis carried out by Heather Hunter and himself.

The gap analysis focused on the 5 main target areas of Leader breaking down the current state of affairs and proposing various steps of relevance:

1. Young people and enterprise
2. Businesses using bio-energy
3. Sustainable farming and forestry
4. Safeguarding Jobs
5. Employment and skills provision

Additionally draft copies of the LAG's Annual Report and Work Plan were distributed and LAG Members invited to submit feedback and comments by the 16th June 2010.

6.0 Project Applications

In accordance with the workings of the Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group, members are asked to declare any direct or indirect personal interests (including financial) in relation to the LEADER Applications presented for the meeting, and shall disclose the nature of those interests to the meeting.

The Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group will decide whether those interests merit exclusion from the funding decision, with the Chair reserving the right to make final judgment.

Two applications were presented for consideration. Members were told that the format would be slightly different for this meeting, the applicants would each have the standard 10 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions but that the usual 15 minutes for discussion within the LAG would be held for each applicant after both presentations had been made.

6.1 NUL022 – Slate & Nature

Gerard van der Veen presented.

Declared Interest: No Declared Interest

Summary:

- Innovation: NULAG have already seen this project a year ago. The new business will introduce new slate work technologies and original natural designs into the tourist market across the Northumberland Uplands. It also offers new opportunities for aspiring small businesses to learn from a successful micro-manufacture start-up. It is also a new location for art tours in the region.
- Key Outcomes and Joined-Up Solutions: The project is focussed on the construction of a studio, a workshop and storage shed for Slate and Nature. The main outcome from this will be the start up of a new small business.
- Need / Opportunity: The prototype development work that the applicant has already invested in has yielded a large number of future orders. 1.5 full time jobs are predicted.
- Value for Money: The metrics above are calculated against the overall grant that the applicant would receive if successful. This project would deliver against high-level objective 1: Support Micro-Enterprise Development (strategic priorities 2, 3 and 4) and high-level objective 3: Assist Communities to become more Sustainable (strategic priorities 1 and 3).

Vote:

- Vote to support the idea – 8 Fore / 3 Against
- Vote to fund total amount requested – 9 Fore / 2 Against

Action: Tom to advise the applicants of the LAG's decision

6.2 NUL081 – Eastbanks Eco Bothy

Mr Alasdair Mitchell presented the application for the Eastbanks Eco Bothy.

Declared Interest: Stuart Evans, Anne Charlton and Anthony Murray declared interest

Summary:

- Innovation: Development of self-catering accommodation is not in itself innovative –

nor is the effort to diversify a farm income. The design idea for the Bothy itself is making use of new, environmentally friendly technology. Plans show that electricity will be provided by a small wind turbine, heating by a wood burning stove and water and sewage systems are both environmentally sustainable.

- Key Outcomes and Joined-Up Solutions: The application is made on the basis of diversifying the income of a farm business, rather than as a new self catering accommodation. There are however links with Northumberland Tourism's efforts to promote Hadrian's Wall to visitors.
- Need / Opportunity: The rationale provided for why this project is needed, is based on farm business diversification. Considering the location, there does appear to be an opportunity to tap in to the walking market along the Hadrian's Wall corridor.
- Value for Money: There are no new jobs created by this project but it does offer NULAG some value for money against businesses using bio-energy and our match funding target (65% self funded). This project would deliver against high-level objective 1: Support Micro-Enterprise Development (strategic priority 3), high-level objective 4: Support Sustainable Farming and Forestry (strategic priorities 3 and 4) and high level objective 5: Develop Tourism and Recreation.

Vote:

- Vote to support the idea – 10 Fore / None Against
- Vote to fund total amount requested – 11 Fore

Action: Tom to advise the applicants of the LAG's decision

7.0 Quarterly Claims & Timesheets

NU LAG Admin, Sylvia Byerley, reminded all members that claims for the current financial quarter were due by Friday, 18 June 2010.

8.0 Any Other Business (20.30)

LAG Co-ordinator, Tom Burston, confirmed that appointment of Phillipa Craig to the new position of Technical Funding Support officer.

Carol Robinson, of Northumberland County Council, introduced herself and explained that her appointment is to aid with the preparation of the files at the council to aid speed up the process.

Robert Mayhew of Northumberland National Park introduced himself and explained to members that with his appointment to Director of Programs and Specials Services he will be overseeing the Parks involvement with the Leader program.

Chairman, Roger Wilson, reported back on the visit hosted by NULAG from a Leader group based in Motala, Sweden. Their project focuses on the rehabilitation of at risk youths and adults back into main stream work through the use of farm work, livestock management and equine husbandry.

While here they visited some leader funded programs, namely horse power for ability and Equestrian Pilates, as well as meeting with other groups involved in the use of horse as facilitators in rehabilitation.

LAG Co-ordinator, Tom Burston gave a brief account on the two day visit from an Estonian Leader.

9.0 Closing Comments from the Chair

The Chairman brought the meeting to a close and thanked Judith Weir and the ladies of Wark Town Hall committee for catering the meeting.

Venue, Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date for the next NU Leader meeting was confirmed as Tuesday, 10th August 2010 with the venue to be decided.